

Shrewsbury School Journal

Serving a community of continuous learners

Spring 2011 • Vol XV No. 3

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Superintendent's Corner

The way we do things

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER
SUPERINTENDENT

As our schools close out another successful academic year and plan for the upcoming one, I have been thinking about our district's strengths and needs. In this era of data-driven accountability, it is all too easy to get lost in the statistics, such as test scores, budget, enrollment, and so on. We are justifiably proud of our district's results and cost efficiency, but those statistics do not tell the most important things about our schools. I have been reminded several times recently that what students, educators, parents, and community members value most about a Shrewsbury education is the human element – how our schools shape students' lives for the better.

Leadership and management experts emphasize the importance of an organization's "culture" as a crucial element for long-term success. Many cite the phrase "the way we do things around here" as the simplest definition of culture; that is, the organization demonstrates its values by the way it goes about its business. I believe that our district has a very strong culture, as evidenced by the high levels of satisfaction among our stakeholders.

I have been reminded several times recently that what students, educators, parents, and community members value most about a Shrewsbury education is the human element – how our schools shape students' lives for the better.

However, I am also acutely aware that it has taken many years and much effort to develop our unique way of approaching our work, and that unless we pay close attention our culture

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**The changing face
of Sherwood Middle School**
An update

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Retirees
A fond farewell

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Project Snowflake and Literacy Night
Two special school happenings

'Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.'

Lord Brougham 1778-1868



Photo by Dana Canzano

The Fourth Annual Road Scholars 5K Fun Run sets new records

See page 3 for details and a list of sponsors

The Sheriff "Shoves off"

P.J. O'CONNELL
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

June 30, 2011 marks the end of an era at Shrewsbury High School: the Ken Largess era. Mr. Largess, the Sheriff of Shrewsbury High School, retires at the end of this school year after thirty-nine years of service as an educator with thirty-one years as an assistant principal at the high school. His passion for education, experience in handling the most difficult situations, and wisdom in supporting both students and staff will undoubtedly be missed.

Mr. Largess has always fostered a school culture that focuses on students. He takes great pride in Shrewsbury High School, as he is a member of the class of 1968. After graduating from Shrewsbury High, Mr. Largess went on to pursue a major in elementary education at Worcester State College and completed his student teaching as a 5th grade teacher at Ward School in 1971. Prior to serving as assistant principal, he spent eight years as a 3rd, 4th and 6th grade elementary teacher at Spring Street School. His career as an administrator began in 1980. Coincidentally his first 4th grade class at Spring street School would eventually become his first graduating class in 1981.

Mr. Largess also spent several years as a coach, having led the 7th and 8th grade boys basketball teams in 1971 and 1972. From there he spent twelve years coaching Freshman and JV basketball and softball before coming the Girls Varsity Basketball Coach. Athletics has always been his passion as demonstrated by his presence at contests over his thirty-nine year career. Mr. Largess gave up coaching later in his career to stay closer to his family and watch his three children play sports.

When asked about moments in his career that he is most proud of, Mr. Largess reflected on his time as an 8th grade administrator at the high school from 1983

to 1996. He was successfully able to create the middle school concept at the high school with 8th grade teams. This sustained program focused on core academics with a strong co-curricular program. Mr. Largess is also responsible for the development of the Student Support Team (SST) model at the high school. This concept built and strengthened the Special Education program, helping the school identify and support students who were most in need. Another major milestone in Ken Largess's career was the building of the new high school. His vision, oversight, and participation from 1997-2002 has left our community with a state-of-the-art high school and a model for new school construction around the state. Mr. Largess was involved in every fine detail from the selection of colors, to the organization of fields and the quality of desks.

His passion for education, experience in handling the most difficult situations, and wisdom in supporting both students and staff will undoubtedly be missed.

Other accolades include being named the Spirit of Shrewsbury Festival Grand Marshal in 2002 and, more recently, a John Collins Award recipient.

In his tenure, he has worked to support and empower new principals, assistant principals, athletic directors, and special education directors. A man not defined by title, but instead by the way in which both students and staff seek his guidance, Mr. Largess has always been the one who puts himself on the line while believing in his work. When asked about Mr. Largess's impact on Shrewsbury High School, Mr. Brian Reagan stated, "Ken is the most passionate school administrator that I have ever encountered. He operates with students'


SHERIFF, see page 4

DR. SAWYER, *from page 1*

is at risk of deteriorating quickly. To avoid this, we need to continue to be sure that our actions match our values. Every culture has bellwethers who signal the importance of “the way we do things around here.” This issue of the Journal highlights two such leaders who are leaving us after long commitments to the Shrewsbury Public Schools. As a School Committee member for 15 years, Mark Murray advocated passionately for the highest quality education, while supporting educators’ work with enthusiasm. As an educator for 39 years, 31 of them as assistant principal at Shrewsbury High School, Ken Largess influenced thousands of students with his high expectations for respectful behavior, instilling a sense of pride in SHS as a place where, in his words, “we don’t want to be just like everyone else.” While Mark and Ken will no longer be in these roles, their contributions to our schools’ strong culture will live on by influencing those who follow, which will preserve the values that make Shrewsbury special. Culture is the result of people’s behavior, but it is also a powerful force that shapes people’s behavior. The ultimate test of our district’s culture is how people treat each other – especially students. Therefore, I was very gratified to listen to the remarks given by Syed Ali, the Valedictorian for the Class of 2011, at the recent Commencement ceremony. Syed lived in many different places and attended multiple school districts prior to arriving at SHS for his sophomore year. He described his experience this way:

The Shrewsbury High School community welcomed me with open arms, something to which I was unaccustomed. At other schools, I have seen people mocked for many different things; for the color of their skin, for their religion; even for how they appeared. But Shrewsbury is different. Part of what makes Shrewsbury so unique is that students here truly are embraced for their differences. A Shrewsbury student can rest at ease knowing that he will be welcomed and loved for what makes him an individual, rather than castigated for it. This truly is something very special; something which makes Shrewsbury stand out from the so-called crowd.

Experiences like Syed’s don’t just happen by chance. They are the result of conscious decisions to live according to the values and aspirations we all hold for our schools, so that “the way we do things around here” improves the lives of our children.



The non-profit Shrewsbury School Journal is published three times a year and reaches every household in the diverse and growing town of Shrewsbury. It is published by the central office of the Shrewsbury Public Schools with the help and expertise of many individuals. The mission of the Shrewsbury School Journal is to provide an accurate source of information about our school system and the town in which we live. We hope to foster a community of continuous learners.

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer
Superintendent

Dr. Jay Cummings
Assistant Superintendent

Dawna Alphonse & Kimberlee Cantin
Project Coordinators

A peek at Parker Road Preschool

LISA ROBINSON
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Welcome to Parker Road Preschool! The district’s preschool programs are Shrewsbury’s hidden gem. Our program has grown vastly in the last ten years with a current enrollment of 266 preschool students. The important role preschool plays in preparing young learners for elementary education, and general life skills, is becoming more widely recognized across communities and school systems. Parker Road Preschool demonstrates an exemplary model for preschool and the integration of students with and without disabilities. As important as preschool is, it is not yet federally or state mandated as grades one through twelve are. This may lead you to wonder why the Shrewsbury Public Schools has a preschool program. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) all school districts accepting federal funds are required to provide special education and/or related services at the preschool level for preschool age children with disabilities (three to five years old). To receive federal funding for preschool level programs, districts are required to educate students with disabilities with their same aged peers who do not have disabilities. A microcosm of the real world, this model benefits the children with disabilities by providing peer models, while reciprocally benefitting the children without disabilities by being models and better understanding differences. This integrated classroom composition is a more natural learning environment, which is considered under IDEA to be the least restrictive school setting for children three to five years old. With seven classrooms across two sites, (five at the former North Shore School at Parker Road, and two at 2 Wesleyan Terrace), the Parker Road Preschool offers seven integrated preschool sessions in the morning and five in the afternoon. In addition to the integrated preschool sessions, one classroom



Photo by Keriann Kimball

Preschool friends Sheariah Manu and Joy Erhayel, discover how salt affects ice at the science center.

provides an integrated morning program with a substantially separate classroom component in the afternoon. Additionally, a preschool classroom at Beal Early Learning Center offers two integrated sessions for children who will attend kindergarten the following year. The Little Colonials Preschool at Shrewsbury High School, part of the and Family and Consumer Science Department, also provides morning and afternoon preschool. In the majority of cases, children with disabilities are referred from an Early Intervention Agency six months before turning three years old for an evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool services. A lottery is held annually in January for the students without disabilities. To date,

135 students without disabilities are enrolled for the coming 2011-2012 school year and there is a waitlist. All Parker Road Preschool students are provided with developmentally appropriate experiences, led by qualified and talented early childhood educators with Master’s degrees and appropriate certification by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The maximum class size of fifteen is mandated by the Massachusetts Regulations for Special Education. At least two adults in each classroom facilitate every area of learning including social and play skills as well as pre-academic skills. Kindergarten teachers report that our preschoolers come to kindergarten confident and ready to learn!

School councils are getting it done

RICK SAIA
HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBER

The general structure of a public school system hasn’t changed from the days when even the oldest among us attended school. An elected or appointed school committee hires a superintendent to oversee the entire system. A principal oversees each school. The principal may have one or more assistant principals. Then there are teachers and other staff members who deliver the education to the students, as well as the additional staff who feed them, transport them, coach them, and ensure the school is clean each day. Yet, behind the scenes, there’s something relatively new that brings together teachers, parents, other community members, and students: the school council. Established under the state’s Education Reform Act of 1993, school councils are designed to promote more “school based” decision-making and provide each principal with a panel of advisers to aid in planning, goal setting, and budgeting. A primary responsibility of each council is the development of the school’s improvement plan each year. The councils also provide a venue for teachers and administrators to be innovative and creative in their

approaches to education while becoming more responsive to the needs of parents and students. The council experience has been valuable to Maureen Monopoli, a social studies teacher at Shrewsbury High who serves as one of three teacher representatives on that school’s council and will become one of the school’s three new assistant principals in July. “By being on the school council, I have been able to transfer and address some of the concerns discussed at the meetings into my classroom,” she says. As an example, she cited one result from a 2010 survey of recent graduates on their high school experiences that the council developed. “I was able to tweak some of my teaching techniques to improve on the areas that were addressed in the survey.” Monopoli says her experience on the council will help her in her new role. “I feel very lucky to have been a member of the school council and exposed to the discussions at the meetings. It gave me a broader picture of the entire high school experience and decision-making process.” As the schools deal with limited financial resources, the council at Spring Street School has become vital, according to Spring Street Principal Bryan Mabie. The council has helped “identify where our priorities need to be in spending the limited amount of money that we

have,” he says. “We have also needed to be more creative in identifying ways to get things done with limited or no resources. Whether it’s coming up with ways to do things more efficiently, networking within the community to identify potential volunteers, or prioritizing our needs, our council is invaluable.” Mabie points to one initiative in particular: developing community partnerships to provide resources and services to enrich student learning. “Our council developed a survey to solicit support from the community to come into our school as volunteers. As a result, a number of respondents are now volunteering in our school with students on enrichment activities, providing extra support to students, and even looking for grant opportunities that would be applicable to some of the initiatives at our school.” At least at Spring Street, the council fulfills the mission dictated by the state nearly two decades ago. The council’s makeup “enabled me to get a perspective from both a faculty and parents view,” Mabie says. “This helps in being able to have input from both [groups of] stakeholders to consider when making decisions.”

Rick Saia is a parent representative on the Shrewsbury High School advisory council.

4th Annual Road Scholars Race

BETH McCOLLUM
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The fourth annual Shrewsbury Road Scholars 5K/Fun Run was held on Sunday, April 10, 2011, at Oak Middle School. Thanks to the community and the work of a very dedicated volunteer committee, this year’s event boasted more sponsors, issued more bibs, and raised more revenue, than any previous race.

Presenting Sponsors (\$1,000) pictured at right and below for 2011 were Dunkin’ Donuts of Shrewsbury, Avidia Bank, Shrewsbury Health & Racquet Club (SHARC), Fallon Community Health Plan, and Price Chopper of Shrewsbury.

Supporting Sponsors (\$500) were the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Darryl Henry Arborist and Landscape Contractor, National Facility Services, Inc., The Law Offices of Joseph J. Cariglia, Town Fair Tire, Buca di Beppo Italian Restaurant, and Saint Vincent Medical Group. Food, water, and prizes were also donated to the event, and a more complete list of donors can be found on the race website: shrewsburyroadscholars.org.

A total of 474 bibs were issued to participants in the 5k and 1mile fun run, and 281 runners were timed in the 5k race. The official starter of the race was four-time Boston Marathon winner Bill Rodgers, who thrilled attendees by staying after the race to meet runners and sign autographs.

Proceeds from the Shrewsbury Road Scholars 5K/Fun Run will go to the Citizens for Education Fund (CEF) to purchase books and materials, and support innovative programs and activities in Shrewsbury Public Schools. Revenue from this year’s event is estimated to be over \$12,000.



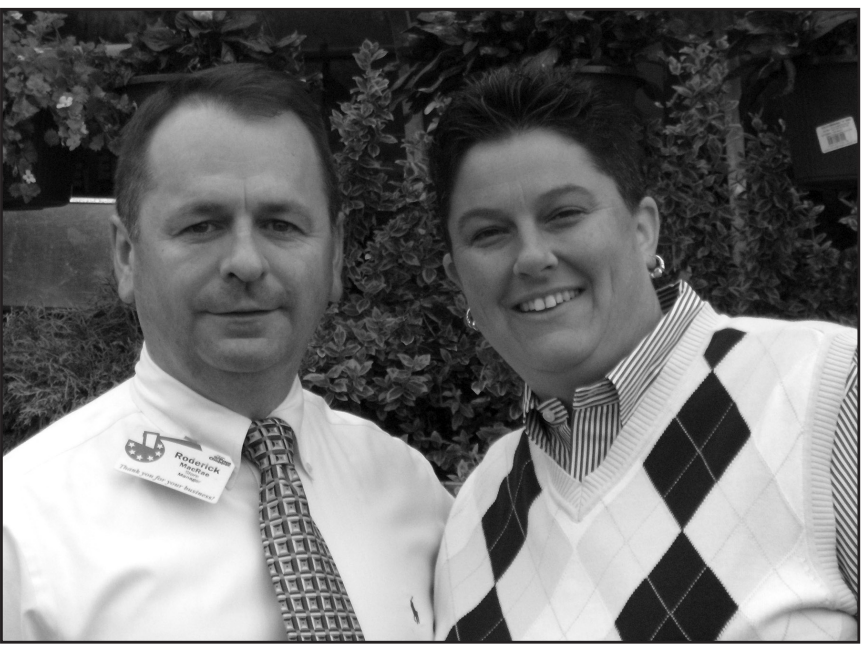
Pictured above Presenting Sponsor Dunkin’ Donuts at the Maple Street location are from L-R: Baha Muhawi, Athra Jabbar, Gladis Gazi, Store Manager Paulo Costa and Danielle Cormier.



Pictured above at SHARC’s (Shrewsbury Health and Racquet Club) outdoor pool is Presenting Sponsor and Owner Darline Yatim.



Pat Maher-Harrington, Assistant Vice President Market Manager, Avidia Bank



Pictured at their new location at 731 Boston Turnpike in Shrewsbury are Presenting Sponsor Price Chopper Store Managers Rick MacRae and Tammie Sullivan.



From left to right: Karla Flores, Andrew Nocon, Roscoe Gay, Brendaliz Torres, Patrick Hussey, Pam Parent, Marlene Perno, W. Patrick Hughes (President & CEO) and Gerry Campbell from Fallon Healthcare

Chairperson’s budget message

JOHN R. SAMIA
SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

In May, the School Department budget for 2011-2012 was approved at the annual Town Meeting. The School Committee requested an appropriated budget of \$47,139,676, which represents a level-funded appropriation, or a 0% increase from our current budget. The School Committee and the administration recognize the fiscal constraints we are under as a community, and we believe this budget is in line with the economic times.

This budget request was carefully developed over several months around the following priorities:

- 1) Maintaining current personnel and programming;
- 2) Responding to ongoing mandates;
- 3) Making strategic investments to mitigate long term cost drivers; and
- 4) Preventing further erosion of resources, especially textbooks, curriculum materials, and technology.

The level of resources represented by this budget will be sufficient to allow

This budget will allow our program to continue its excellent performance.

us to maintain our current personnel and program and respond to ongoing mandates, and to a lesser extent be able to make some modest strategic investments and prevent further erosion of resources. There are no layoffs in this budget plan. This is due to several factors, including:

- The utilization of remaining federal stimulus funds of approximately \$1.3 million.
- An estimated doubling of state reimbursement of special education costs.
- Innovative initiatives, such as a joint special education program with the Assabet Valley Collaborative expected to save over \$50,000 next year and \$600,000 over the next eight years, as well as the development of an advanced math program at the middle school level that is helping to reduce the number of students leaving for charter schools.
- A conservative approach to the administration of the current year’s budget, combined with favorable circumstances in this and next year’s special education costs and leveraging eligible grants, tuition, and fee accounts wherever possible.

This budget will allow our program to continue its excellent performance. Highlights of the past year include:

- A national study done by the Center for American Progress places the Shrewsbury Public Schools in the top 2.8% of over 9,000 K-12 districts in the United States for “return on investment” when comparing cost to performance.
- Shrewsbury had more Governor’s Commendation Schools (four) for achievement and improvement on the state MCAS exams than any other district in Central Massachusetts, and as a district placed among the top 10% in the state on several of the exams (as high as the top 1% on a single exam and in the top 13% in the aggregate).
- Shrewsbury was one of only 388 districts in the nation to be named to the College Board’s Honor Roll for simultaneously increasing student access to and improving student achievement in Advanced Placement courses.

Sheriff

SHOVES OFF, *from page 1*

best interests in mind and to them he is a shoulder to cry on, a surrogate parent, a sage, a super-fan, and the enforcer. I have witnessed him deliver the difficult news of a suspension leading to anger and frustration on the part of the student and then a few days later, upon that student’s return to school, provide a pat on the back or a hug, and reassure that student that it was time to leave the past in the past and focus on the future.”

As a true representation of his career, Principal Reagan concluded with the following remarks regarding the difference he has made as a school administrator, “In many ways, Shrewsbury High School is what it is because of Ken Largess. He often tells students ‘we don’t want to be like everybody else.’ When he says this, it is said with sincerity, and because of him, Shrewsbury



Photo by Steve Levine

Ken Largess, above, speaks at the Shrewsbury Education Foundations award night. He was the recipient of the First Annual John P. Collins Award for Excellence in the category of Leadership.

High School is not like everybody else. His commitment to Shrewsbury is unlike anything I have seen before.”

On a personal note, I have had the good fortune of having Mr. Largess as an administrator while in high school and the more recent opportunity of working under his leadership. He has always been a strong communicator who will always tell you how he feels, and his sentiments always seems to be right on point. His undying commitment to our school system and all of the students, past and present, will be greatly missed, but with his departure he leaves a legacy of a strong sense of pride in the high school and the community. He is a person who has made a significant positive impact and will be known as someone who made meaningful relationships with both students and staff while always protecting the integrity of the high school. Mr. Largess has been a man who has inspired hope for generations of students and families. As you see Mr. Kenneth Largess in the upcoming months and year, I ask you to join me in congratulating and thanking him for his many years of service to our community.

Shrewsbury Public Schools notice of non-discrimination

The Shrewsbury Public Schools is required by the Massachusetts Department of Education to publish an annual statement of non-discrimination. This notice serves to meet that requirement. The Massachusetts Equal Educational Opportunity statute, General Laws Chapter 76 & 5, ensures that all students have the right to equal educational opportunities in the public schools. The Shrewsbury Public School District is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. The Shrewsbury Public Schools is in compliance with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment. The complete Statement of Non-discrimination can be obtained by contacting the Superintendent’s Office of the Shrewsbury School Department at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545 or by calling 508-841-8400 to request a copy.

Foreign language happenings

JOYCE TEGGART
DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE

There has been a lot going on in foreign language classrooms across the district. In March, Sherwood and Oak Middle School students, who currently study Spanish, French, Latin and Chinese, participated in various activities designed to promote and celebrate Foreign Language Week. Poster contests, cultural displays, trivia contests, and other events provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate their cultural knowledge and showcase their artistic abilities. In May, French teachers Marylou Luukko and Heather Bird took a group of 74 students from Oak Middle School to New York City to visit the United Nations and participate in several other culture based activities. Once in NYC, two French-speaking tour guides led the group and students had an opportunity to sample French cuisine at Les Sans Culottes restaurant.

At the high school level, newly inducted Spanish National Honor Society students held a Spanish movie night in March. The movie

entitled “ Ladrón que roba al ladrón,” was featured and all students who attended the evening enjoyed a taste of authentic ‘churros’, a sweet Spanish pastry that was made on site by Spanish teacher-advisors Ken Almeida and Katelynn Babigian. April vacation week provided time for two groups of SHS foreign language students to travel abroad and experience other cultures firsthand.

April vacation week provided time for two groups of SHS foreign language students to travel abroad and experience other cultures firsthand.

Fourteen students, led by Spanish teachers Madeleine Del Toro and Anne Welch, went to Puerto Rico and ten students, under the direction of Chinese teachers Xin Xin and ChinHuei Yeh spent the week in China to immerse in both the language

and the culture of each country. All students have been studying either Spanish or Chinese since grade five and these trips provided them an exciting opportunity to practice their language skills in real life settings.

The trip to Puerto Rico left on Saturday, April 16th and students arrived in the capital city of San Juan ready to begin a weeklong tour, visiting places such as Old San Juan and Ponce as well as the El Yunque Rainforest. Highlights included El Morro, El Castillo Serralles and the Camuy Caverns. Each day, students enjoyed many different activities and a myriad of opportunities to interact in the target language.

Meanwhile, Chinese language students departed on April 14th for a journey to Beijing where they stayed with host families. Besides visiting the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, they also attended classes at the Dongzhimen High School, which is an established sister school of SHS. All students returned to Shrewsbury very enthusiastic to share the many memorable experiences that they had with authentic foods, customs and everyday life in China.

The changing face of Sherwood Middle School

JANE O. LIZOTTE
SHERWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Sherwood Middle School’s new building project is currently underway - ahead of schedule and under budget! The Sherwood Building Committee, in collaboration with the Gilbane Building Company, Lamoureux-Pagano Associates, PMA Consultants, and the Sherwood Middle School administration, is working diligently to ensure clear and consistent communication and thorough site and building planning. The work will undoubtedly result in a successful outcome for the school community! The 130,000 square foot building includes a budget of \$47,300,000. It is important to note that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will be paying 53.16% of all eligible costs.

The Sherwood Middle School community is very excited about the progress of the project, despite some inconveniences that accompany such an expansive project! Daily communication between the SMS administration and representatives from Gilbane, along with weekly and monthly planning meetings, have allowed for a smooth process that began with the early site and foundation phase, and continues with the current construction phase. In addition, changes in the parking and traveling patterns at both SMS and OMS have resulted in a safer and more efficient traffic environment for bus riders, students traveling by car, and students who walk to and from school. Cars traveling to Sherwood Middle School are now using Crescent Street to deliver students to a parking lot that is located behind the school. Parents and caretakers at Oak Middle School are entering and exiting at the front of the school. All bus traffic is now entering both middle school campuses at Sherwood Avenue and either exiting at Oak Street or from Hutchins Street. These new traffic patterns have allowed car traffic to be separate from bus traffic, providing a far safer route for traveling than has been the case for the past several years. The challenges experienced thus far have been few, and include an absence of field space, along with limited noise during the school day. If you have not passed through



Photo by Susan Hirsch

Mr. Al Abdella from Gilbane Building Corporaion stands with Sherwood Middle School students from L-R Joe Clapper, Sarah King, Kevin Hayes, Alefia Dahod, JJ Hannaford, Heather Brusa

the middle school campus lately, you will be surprised by the changing landscape.

One of the greatest benefits experienced by the school community includes the opportunity to witness and reflect on the building of a new school firsthand. Teacher, Ms. Sue Hirsh, shares her students’ learning experiences as follows:

“My ELA class has a fabulous view of the construction going on here at Sherwood. We began by writing in our journals on a daily basis to chronicle the progress being made and sharpen our observation and writing skills. On a particularly exciting day of construction, we wrote in our journals for an entire class period while Mrs. Flanagan photographed the trucks and the construction going on. The next day we were in the computer lab typing up what we saw and inserting Mrs. Flanagan’s pictures into our compositions. This led to inviting representatives from Gilbane Construction, Al Abdella and Danielle Crawford, to our class for interviews. They gave us a wonderful and informative presentation, and we were able to ask all of our questions and then some! Mrs. Flanagan was there videotaping it all. We have since typed up our interviews and are planning to combine our reflections with

Mrs. Flanagan’s wonderful photographs and video to make a presentation at our next Grade 5 Community Meeting. Mr. Abdella has spent some wonderful time with us, and has even enjoyed lunch with us! He brought us each our own hard hat!”

Mrs. Gail Flanagan, one of SMS’s technology integration specialists, has collaborated with faculty members and has created a video that shows one of the class lessons taught by representatives from Gilbane Building Company. The lesson can be viewed on the school’s website: <http://schools.shrewsbury-ma.gov/egov/docs/1305127134157.htm>

In addition, Mrs. Flanagan has worked with teachers, instructional aides, and students to photograph and document the construction progress in order to provide an accurate timeline of the project. The photographs and journal entries have been saved on the district server for all students and teachers to access. These are just a few examples of the ways in which the SMS community is creating learning opportunities for students, as the school landscape changes before our eyes!

A fond farewell

THOMAS M. KENNEDY
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Eight staff members are nearing the end of their teacher/administrator careers after having served the children of Shrewsbury for a combined total of 195 years! Each of these individuals was recently recognized at a School Committee meeting for their commitment and dedication to the children of Shrewsbury. Listed below are the names, position, school, and years of service to Shrewsbury. The entire community wishes a happy and healthy retirement to all our retirees.

Jean Dewar

34 years of service in education, including 20 years at Shrewsbury High School as a special education teacher

Elisa LaChance

25 years of service in education, all in Shrewsbury, as a Visual Arts Teacher throughout the district, including many years at Paton School

Jean Lalone

32 years of service in education, including 21 years in Shrewsbury at the Beal Early Childhood Center as a Kindergarten and Grade 1 teacher

Kenneth Largess

39 years of service in education, all in Shrewsbury as Assistant Principal at Shrewsbury High School and as classroom teacher at Spring Street School

Paula Leva

34 years of service in education, including 7 years in Shrewsbury as a Special Education Teacher at Sherwood Middle School

Carla Mack

30 years of service in education, including 26 years in Shrewsbury, primarily as a special education teacher at Paton School and the Middle School.

Marjorie Potash

43 years of service in education, including 22 years at Shrewsbury High School as a Special Education Teacher

Marion Tauras

35 years of service in education, all in Shrewsbury as a Visual Arts Teacher throughout the district, including many years at Coolidge School



JEAN DEWAR



ELISA LACHANCE



JEAN LALONE



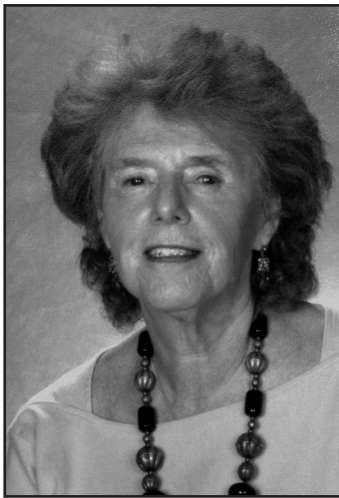
KENNETH LARGESS



PAULA LEVA



CARLA MACK



MARJORIE POTASH



MARION TAURAS

Photos courtesy of Casson-Foster Photographers

Mark Murray moves on

SANDRA M. FRYC
SCHOOL COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRPERSON

After serving fifteen years as a School Committee member, Mark Murray decided not to run for re-election this past May. Mark has been an incredibly strong supporter of public education in Shrewsbury. He was never shy about making his thoughts known and was passionate about the district's mission to provide all students with the



Photo by Rick Marchand

best possible education. Over the past 15 years, Mark has given countless hours to our schools. He has helped to guide the district through changes in education, the building of new schools, complex budget cycles and significant growth in our student population and educational needs. Our town and the children of our community have benefited greatly during Mark's service as a School Committee member.

Not only was Mark an active and involved school committee member, he is also the father of six children, worked full time at Worcester Business Journal and was a volunteer track coach at the high school. I want to thank Cheryl Murray and the entire Murray family for sharing Mark with our community for so many years. While Mark may have missed some family time, his dedication and devotion to the students of Shrewsbury will pay long lasting dividends.

On behalf of my fellow school committee members, we want to wish Mark well in his future endeavors. We are fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve with Mark on the School Committee and to have learned from him. Mark's wisdom, guidance and friendship will certainly be missed. One thing Mark always said was, "Enjoy it." He is right; serving our school community is an honor and a task that Mark showed each of us how to do well and with passion.

Shrewsbury Education Foundation's "Busy Bees"

MELANIE PETRUCCI
PARENT AND SEF VOLUNTEER

Shrewsbury Education Foundation awarded the First Annual John P. Collins Awards for Excellence along with their honoring the Grant recipients at their award dinner in January.

The great successes of Shrewsbury's students—in personal development, academic achievement, athletics and



Photo by Steve Levine

Pictured above from l-r are Oak Middle School 8 Gold team members who received the "Team" award Kara Hadavi, Carol Hester, Melissa McDonald, Jeremy Mularella, Janet Allen and Derek Pizzuto

BUSY BEES, see page 8

Chairperson's budget message

BUDGET MESSAGE from page 3

• Shrewsbury students continue to earn many awards and championships in academics, music and drama, the visual arts, and athletics.

We believe that the following year will be even more challenging than next year, and as a result the we are beginning a strategic planning process in order to identify

key areas of focus and determine how to best preserve the outstanding value the district provides to the community. We will also be reaching out and collaborating with adjacent communities' elected boards in an effort to lobby at the state level to develop a workable set of mandates that either are fully funded by the Commonwealth or adjusted so that they provide a workable regulatory

framework for each community. We are reaping awards from the town's investment in children, and while next year's budget is one of maintenance, our schools and students continue to thrive and excel, and that is something for which all of us should be very proud. We continue to balance cost and benefit while trying to preserve the value that strong schools provide to Shrewsbury.

Youth Art Month

PAMELA LeBLANC
ART DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

During the Month of March, Thirty-seven students from Shrewsbury Public Schools had their work selected and displayed at Worcester Art Museums Youth Art Month. These young artists were (Listed alphabetical by grade):

- Ryan Kinsky**, Kindergarten – Ms. Tauras, Beal
Courtney Coffman, Gr. 1 – Mrs. Lividini, Spring Street
Seohyun (Alice) Lee, Gr. 1 – Mr. Wilson, Floral
Andrea Liu, Gr. 2 – Mrs. LaChance, Paton
Samantha Williams, Gr. 2– Mrs. Lividini, Spring Street
Emily Young, Gr. 2– Mrs. Lividini, Spring Street
Alix Barry, Gr. 3- Mr. Wilson, Floral
Sunny Huang, Gr.3 – Mr. Wilson, Floral
Catherine Pellini, Gr. 3 – Mrs. Lividini, Spring Street
Polina Regaeva, Gr. 3 - Mrs. LaChance, Paton
Brady Belanger, Gr. 4 – Ms. Tauras, Coolidge
Tianyou (David) Ma, Gr. 4 - Ms. Tauras, Coolidge
Kenneth Ngo, Gr. 4 - Mrs. LaChance, Paton
Andrew Voronin, Gr. 4– Mrs. Lividini, Spring Street
Luke Balmforth, Gr.5 – Ms. Kunar, Sherwood Middle
Xiaoying Zhen, Gr. 5 – Ms. Kunar, Sherwood Middle
Laura Townsend, Gr. 6– Ms. Kunar, Sherwood Middle
Erin Chen, Gr. 7 – Mr. Paquette, Oak Middle School
Caitlin Cullen, Gr. 8 – Mr. Paquette, Oak Middle School
Matthew Morana, Gr. 8 – Mr. Paquette, Oak Middle School
Jill Banach, Gr. 9 – Mrs. LeBlanc, Shrewsbury High School
Kaitlin O’Neill, Gr. 9 – Mrs. Cobb, Shrewsbury High School
Taylor Torreano, Gr. 9 - Ms. Roddy, Shrewsbury High School
Fransheska Alcantara, Gr. 10 – Mrs. Fox, Shrewsbury High School
Alex Chan, Gr. 10 – Mrs. Fox, Shrewsbury High School
Emily Cryan, Gr. 10 – Ms. Roddy, Shrewsbury High School
Samantha Dreifus, Gr. 10 – Mrs. Cobb, Shrewsbury High School
Kiery Fisher, Gr. 10 – Mrs. Cobb, Shrewsbury High School
Lauryn O’Keefe, Gr. 10 – Mrs. Fox, Shrewsbury High School
Emma Winslow, Gr. 10 – Mrs. LeBlanc, Shrewsbury High School
Stephen Krikorian, Gr. 11 – Mrs. LeBlanc, Shrewsbury High School
Marie Laure – Miro, Gr. 11– Ms. Butler, Shrewsbury High School
Jenna Bonaventura, Gr. 12 – Ms. Roddy, Shrewsbury High School
Brianna Brosnan – Smith, Gr. 12 – Ms. Butler, Shrewsbury High School
Lane Callahan, Gr. 12 – Ms. Butler, Shrewsbury High School
Laura Connolly, Gr. 12 – Mrs. LeBlanc, Shrewsbury High School
Ashley Thibodeau, Gr. 12 – Mrs. LeBlanc, Shrewsbury High School

“The Memory Project” (t h e m e m o r y p r o j e c t . o r g)

Mrs. LeBlanc’s National Art Honor Society members took part in the Memory Project, which is a unique initiative where art students create portraits for children and teens around the world that have been orphaned, neglected, or disadvantaged. NAHS members completed

YOUTH ART, see page 5

A winter to remember

SANDRA TRAVERS
SPRING STREET SCHOOL TEACHER

To many people living in New England, this winter was a never-ending series of snowstorms and bone chilling cold. For the students at Spring Street School, their “snowflakes” project brought about an opportunity to help improve the lives of children with life threatening blood disorders such as cancer, sickle cell anemia and hemophilia. This warmed the hearts of everyone involved.

How can we help those around us that are less fortunate? How can we reach children that need our help? These were the questions that the members of the student council found themselves discussing. Teacher, Kristen Liporto, mentioned an article she had read about students making and selling snowflakes to help support the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashbury, CT. As advisors to the student council, Barbara Luby and I felt that this would be the perfect fit for our school community. Little did we know how valuable this project would be in bringing our school community together.

We shared some important facts about the project with the student council. Paul Newman created the camp in Ashbury, CT in 1988 to provide children with life threatening blood disorders with opportunities to experience summer camp like other children. Campers enjoy a full range of activities that include boating, fishing, swimming, camping, performing arts, arts

and crafts, horseback riding, group games, dancing and singing. Children attending the camp do so free of charge but what was even more amazing to us was that less than 2% of the Camp’s operating budget comes from the Newman’s Own Foundation.

Before we knew what had happened, the entire school community had jumped on board in support of this worthy cause.

After learning some motivating facts about the Camp, the students voted to move forward with the project.

The student council members unanimously loved the idea of raising money for children with life threatening blood disorders and voted to move forward with the project. Before we knew what had happened, the entire school community had jumped on board in support of this worthy case. Classroom teachers agreed to share the books, *Robert’s Snow* and *Robert’s Snowflakes* with their classes to introduce the project. Sally Lividini, our Art teacher, designed multiple snowflakes that she shared with every class during their art period to create enthusiasm for the project. Students, teachers, specialists, staff members, and even parents all created over 500 snowflakes. Finally,



Photo by Sandra Travers

parents Michelle Duke and Janine Carleton volunteered to help students sell snowflakes each morning from 8:30-9:00am. Mrs. Duke was actively involved in student government when she was in school and enjoys seeing the positive impact that helping others has on the children. The school community support of this project was inspirational.

We weren’t sure what to expect on the first day of sales but the line of students waiting to purchase snowflakes grew each morning. Snowflakes were purchased in honor of family members, friends and even pets touched by cancer. Throughout the week, the “buzz” began to grow and grow. Students were doing extra chores around their houses to earn extra money and scraping together change from their piggy banks to purchase snowflakes. By the third day, we had completely sold out of snowflakes and students enthusiastically tackled the challenge of creating even more. Any and all donations were accepted. Every little bit counted.

As a result of our efforts, the students of Spring Street were able to raise over \$2,500 for the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. Interestingly enough, \$2,500 is exactly the cost of sending a child with life threatening blood disorders to camp for a week.

Our Project Snowflake was inspired by a similar fundraiser that raised \$100,000 for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute called Robert’s Snow: for Cancer’s Cure. The project was based on a book by Newbery Award winning author, Grace Lin named *Robert’s Snow*. Her husband was diagnosed with cancer and Mrs. Lin wanted to find a way to bring the beauty of the winter snow inside for her husband to enjoy. She wrote the book Robert’s Snow for him. An additional book was later published sharing the snowflakes created by Eric Carle, Emily Arnold McCully, David McPhail, Marjorie Priceman, Mark Teague, Eric Rohmann, and many more award-winning children’s book illustrators called Robert’s Snowflakes.

Although this project was lead by the student council, it would not have been such a success without the support from everyone at Spring Street School. A very special thank you needs to be given to Mrs. Adair and Mr. Mabie for their constant support and help throughout this project.

Project Snowflake is a shining example of how children can come together in a meaningful way to help provide support to others. If you would like to know more about The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, please visit their website at <http://www.BackRowLtoR.com>.
Back Row L to R : Christina Sargent, Michael Walton, Patrick Duke, Oisin Purdy, Daniel Smith.
Front Row L to R : Catherine Samia, Chloe Carleton, Kaitlyn Svendsen.

Gratitude for a job well done

DR. ANTHONY BENT
FORMER SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dawna Alphonse has been the Project Coordinator for the *Shrewsbury School Journal* since its inception well over a decade ago! This edition of the *Journal* will be Dawna’s final one as the Project Coordinator as these responsibilities will be assumed by Kimberlee Cantin, the Shrewsbury Public School’s Executive Assistant for Communications and Operations.

Without Dawna, there would not be a publication of the quality that has characterized the *Journal* over the years. Dawna provides ideas for themes, writes articles, enlists authors, selects the cover



Dawna Alphonse, pictured above, resides in Shrewsbury with her family.

photograph, takes pictures, determines the layout of each edition, chases down the advertisement that helps to pay for the printing and postage of the *Journal*, and coordinates with the printer for delivery to all of Shrewsbury’s addresses. Quite simply, she manages her own supply chain - Walmart could take lessons from her!

It’s not suprising that Dawna has put countless hours into producing a quality product while also maintaining a full time job. As much as anything else, Dawna is cooperative, pleasant, and flexible in dealing with busy school personnel. Yet, year after year, edition after edition, the *Journal* is always a publication that makes us proud.

Thanks to Dawna Alphonse for being such a superb manager, leader and communicator.

Literacy Night at Floral Street School

TODD CURTIS
FLORAL STREET SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

On Friday, April 8, Floral Street School hosted our annual Literacy Night – an event that is one of our most well-attended and meaningful nights of the year. We love this event because it combines so much of what makes Floral Street a special place into one evening.

We talk a lot in schools about the importance of literacy – of becoming a proficient reader, of communicating thoughts, ideas, and emotions through writing, and of learning to hold an audience with the spoken word. These are some of the most important skills that we have in mind when we talk about our core value of maximizing our learning. At literacy night, students get a chance to hear from some inspiring models. This year, author Beth Raisner Glass presented about her book *Noises at Night* – how she developed and wrote it, what it’s like to publish a book, how she works with her illustrator, and then treated the kids to an interactive reading. Storyteller Diane Postoian wowed kids and adults alike with stories that bring her audience right into the story with the power of her writing and presentation.

That would be a great night all by itself, but that wasn’t the end of the night – because the students also get to be the stars of the show. Each year, students are given the opportunity to select a piece of their own writing, a piece they feel is their very best work, and share it. Publicly. In front of an audience. Including strangers... Some complain that public speaking is a lost art, but this year 164 Floral Street students, from first-grade to fourth, took the chance to read their own work in front of a group of ten of their peers along with assembled parents, grandparents, and more. It’s a real treat to watch and listen as they embody our core value of having a positive attitude about learning while also displaying the confidence we talk so much about each day.

The night usually ends as students and families trickle out of these various events and head for the door – but they are almost always slowed by what might be my most favorite piece of the evening. No, it isn’t



Photo by Kimberlee Cantin

Along with many other students, second grader Erin Montigny checks out the gently used books in the Floral Street School lobby that were donated for Litercy Night.

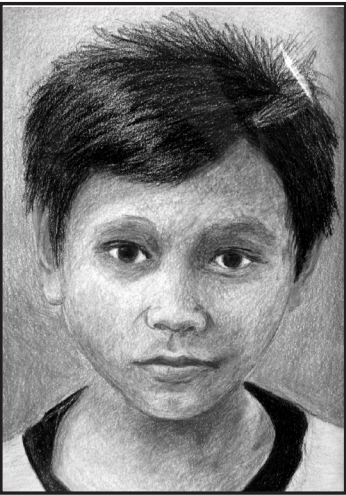
another flashy presenter or anything like that. Instead it is dozens of boxes, holding hundreds of gently used, donated books, lined up near the door. Each student is encouraged to take one with them as they leave. The part I love is how captivated they are by this. In this age of video games, cell phones, and televisions, students are stopped in their tracks by boxes of old books. They pore over the boxes, they turn to their friends or parents with expressions of “Look what I found!” This is the joyfulness of learning that might be the greatest treat for

an educator to witness and that is always one of our goals at Floral Street – it goes just great with high achievement.

We are deeply thankful for our PTO for two significant reasons connected to this event. The first is the hours that volunteers put in making every piece of it possible – it takes months of preparation and hours upon hours to make happen. The other is that, despite everything that the event offers, the PTO’s financial support keeps this event free. That’s pretty exciting, and everyone is looking forward to continuing this event’s great tradition next year!

Artists recognized

YOUTH ART, from page 5



Pictured above is a sample portrait from artist: Alicia Burgess

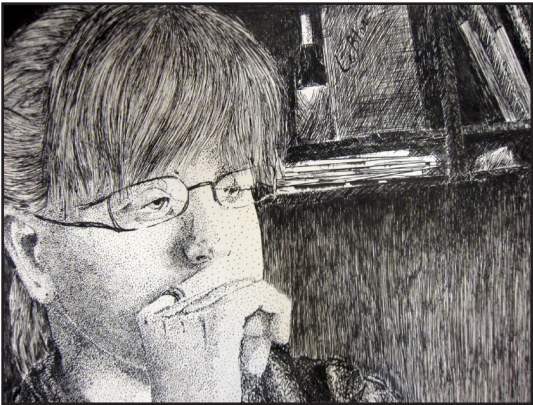
forty-four portraits for orphan children living in Indonesia. The portraits are hand delivered by Ben Shumaker, founder of the Memory Project. Images of the children receiving their portraits can be viewed at site at www.thememoryproject.org/Indonesia

Over 250 junior students are nominated and only 140 are selected to participate in the spring. Teagan Flint was nominated by Mrs. Fox and ultimately selected by a panel of judges to represent Shrewsbury High School. On May 27th and 28th, Teagan joined other selected students to take part in the Art All-State experience. Congratulations!

Congressional Art Competition - James McGovern

Each year, several SHS students enter their works in the Congressional Art Competition. This year the staff asked several students to consider submitting their works. The following students entered the competition and a reception was held on May 7, 2011 at the Narrows Center for the Art in Fall River, MA.

Caitlin DeWolfe	Grade 9
Connie Shen	Grade 9
Marina Li	Grade 10
Hannah Masek	Grade 10
Bianca Renzoni	Grade 10
Filia VanDessel	Grade 10
Teagan Flint	Grade 11
Ashley Bertrand	Grade 12
Brianna Brosnan-Smith	Grade 12
Mariah Pike	Grade 12



Pictured above is the self-portrait from artist: Mariah Pike

With over 180 pieces submitted to the competition, Shrewsbury High School had three students recognized for their outstanding work. **Brianna Brosnan-Smith** was awarded an Honorable

Mention for her architectural cardboard sculpture. **Teagan Flint** was awarded Second Place for her pastel landscape and **Mariah Pike** was awarded Honorable Mention for her pen and ink self portrait. Congratulations!

Therese M. Bacharz Award - Westboro Gallery

Congratulations to Anna Secino for being a recipient of the Therese M. Bacharz Award. Anna was one of several senior art students from surrounding schools who submitted her works to be juried by artists at the Westboro Gallery. Out of all the applicants, Anna was the one senior chosen to receive this award and have her work exhibited at the Westboro Gallery. Her works were exhibited from May 15th - 30th.



Pictured left is original artwork by Therese M. Bacharz Award winner Anna Secino

Pictured right with his original artwork is Matthew LeBlanc Grade 2, Calvin Coolidge School, Ms. Tauras



Pictured left with her original artwork at the top entitled “Beach” is Michaela Sherman Grade 2, Floral Street School, Mr. Wilson

Visiting Artists

During the month of March, Shrewsbury Graduate Sara DeAngelis created a temporary “site specific” piece of art the window of an art room. Her artwork depicted events in her life. Sara is pursuing her Masters Degree in Art Education from Framingham State University.

On April 26th, retired art teacher and watercolorist Lavonne Suwalski visited art students at the high school. After a presentation to students, Lavonne conducted workshops with students in Art Foundations, Drawing and Painting and Studio I classes. Thank you to Mrs. Shari Fox and the Shrewsbury High School Alumni Association for their support through grant funding.

Art All-State

This program is hosted and co-sponsored by the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) and Massachusetts Art Education Association. The program allows high school juniors from across Massachusetts to have an opportunity to meet their peers and professional artists from diverse disciplines to collaborate and work together in a studio setting.

SEF Busy Bees

BUSY BEES, from page 5

the arts—are the result of hard work by nearly 800 innovative, dedicated individuals and teams at all levels with the Shrewsbury Public School system. The Shrewsbury Education Foundation (SEF) was pleased to award the new John P. Collins Awards for Excellence, honoring the exemplary efforts of those whose work brings to life the mission of the Shrewsbury Public Schools: “to provide students with the skills and knowledge for the 21st century, an appreciation of our democratic tradition and the desire to continue to learn throughout life.” The awards are named for former Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools, John P. Collins, PhD, who served as Superintendent of Schools in Shrewsbury for 16 years (1978-1994) and continues to exemplify the highest standards of professionalism and a commitment to lifelong learning.

The first SEF Community Service Award was also presented and the recipient was Shrewsbury resident Hannah Kane. The selection of Mrs. Kane was a cinch, according to SEF President, Missy Hollenback. “When we talked about having an SEF Community Service for Education award,

one name was on everyone’s lips as an example. We all looked at each other and said that person is the one. Next year we will work out a process, but this year it was so obvious.” Hannah has given of herself in so many ways as a community advocate, a parent, a campaigner and businesswoman. Most recently she was at the helm of the recent ballot question committee in support of the new Sherwood Middle school and she has played a leadership role in establishing the very successful “Celebration in the Garden” fundraisers benefiting the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

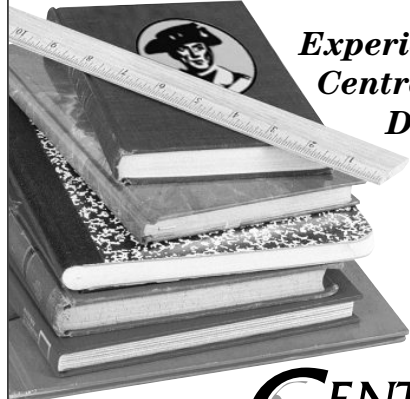
On May 6, 2011 at Veterans Inc., the Shrewsbury Education Foundation hosted its Second Annual Adult Spelling Bee to benefit grants and enrichment programs to teachers in the Shrewsbury Public Schools. This year’s competition included teams who faced off in three qualifying rounds and the last three standing were the Shrewsbury Social Club Butterflies (Barbara Graf, Alicia Ernst, Rona Harris and Laura Nordstrom) and the BaBEEsitting Brainiacs & One

Random Dude (Erin Howard, Robin Snyder, Cindy Wright and Scott Spangenberg), the School Committee team sponsored by CBS (Sandy, John, Dale and Erin). The BaBEEsitting Brainiacs & One Random Dude was ultimately victorious and won the title of Shrewsbury’s Splendiferous Spellers.


Master of Ceremonies for the second year in a row, Hank Stolz of WCRN’s Wake Up Worcester Show, kept the audience entertained once again. Library Director Ellen Dolan and Art Dobson were masterful as this year’s judges. Many local businesses, groups and individuals sponsored words representing their interests as a fun way to promote themselves and raise money for SEF. This year there were 18 teams vs. last year’s 11 with approximately 150 in attendance. Guests were treated to a delicious deli spread, fruit, cookies, coffee and a cash bar reception. Sponsorships, team entrance fees and raffles will enable the SEF to continue to offer enrichment grants to enhance the Shrewsbury Public Schools educational experience.

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